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ABSTRACT

The Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program (MCCFP), a project of the Department of Educational Leadership at Mississippi State University, is designed to assist in the identification, development, and training of the state's future community college leaders. Two participants are nominated by each of the 16 public community college presidents. The year-long program consists of the following activities: attending a leadership retreat; developing a service project and a professional development plan; attending the Phil Hardin Leadership Symposium; and participating in Community College Network Seminars. The effectiveness of the Fellowship program is evaluated by the participants each year through questionnaires. Based on information gathered from the initial class of 1994 Fellows, the following recommendations are included: (1) presidents should be encouraged to consider diversity when nominating fellows, and balance should be sought between vocational and academic administrators; (2) the program should be opened to private community colleges; (3) program auditing should be investigated; (4) a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading option should be considered; (5) more time should be allotted for informal group activities; (6) current and retired community college presidents could be involved in the retreat as speakers, instructors, mentors, or guests at social events; (7) elected class representatives should be invited to assume leadership roles for two years following the retreat; and (8) travel expenses and honoraria for guest speakers and instructors should be included in the cost of future workshops. (The retreat agenda is appended.) (KP)

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Running Head: MCCFP

The Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program (MCCFP)

Paper presented at the Twenty-fourth annual conference of the Southeastern Association for Community College Research

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The Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program

In their 1990 Public Policy Agenda, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) listed leadership development as a priority area for community colleges in the coming years. As community and junior colleges move into the twenty-first century, leadership remains a key issue. Elsner (1984) stated that "a crisis is developing at the leadership level of the American community college movement" (p. 39). Today, this "crisis" is manifesting itself in the number of administrators quickly approaching retirement. In 1992, Donald Bryant reported that about 40 percent of community college administrators and faculty will retire by the year 2000. For this reason he stated that "the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, as well as selected universities, are devoting increased attention to leadership development for America's community and junior colleges" (p. 77).

In the state of Mississippi, community colleges provide much of the education and training needed to make major economic development a reality. The current generation of community college leaders moved Mississippi's two-year institutions into this prominent position through clear vision, hard work, and long service. However, consistent with Bryant's (1992) findings, many of the incumbent deans, presidents, and other key administrators in Mississippi are approaching retirement. Without identification and training, the next generation of Mississippi's community college leaders may fail to build upon the progress of their predecessors.

In the February 13, 1990, issue of The Community and Junior College Times, Nancy Eddy commented, "We need to find ways not only to enhance the current leadership at our colleges but to foster strong and informed administrators at the mid-level, who are ready to

play leadership roles in their current positions and are ready to move into positions with greater responsibilities (p. 2)." With this idea in mind, the Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program (MCCFP) was developed.

History

The MCCFP is a leadership development program initiated in 1994 by the Mississippi State University (MSU) Department of Educational Leadership. The Fellowship Program is designed to assist in the identification, development, and training of the state's future community college leaders. The first of its kind in Mississippi, the MCCFP provides leadership training, professional networking, and a support group for those who aspire to attain leadership positions within the state's community colleges. The need for a program designed to recruit, nurture, and prepare future community and junior college leaders in Mississippi is apparent when recognizing that no other program of this type exists in the state.

Dr. William Scaggs, president of Meridian Community College, was the first to suggest that there be an organized effort to recruit and prepare future community college leaders. He and Dr. Tom Wacaster, Vice-President for Educational Programs and Research for the Phil Hardin Foundation, encouraged the Department of Educational Leadership to seriously consider developing a leadership program for prospective community college leaders. Dr. Wacaster and a contingent from Mississippi State University traveled to Asheville in the summer of 1993 to observe the North Carolina Assistant Principals' Academy directed by Dr. Ann Clontz. The Academy, while serving the needs of K-12 administrators, provided a useful model for the MCCFP. In the Spring of 1994, a proposal was submitted to the Phil Hardin Foundation to secure financial support for the Mississippi Community College Fellowship

Program.

Since the Program's inception, the Phil Hardin Foundation has provided much of the necessary funding. The Phil Hardin Foundation is an educational foundation established in 1964 by the owner of Hardin Bakeries Corporation who is now deceased. The Directors of the Foundation award grants to non-profit organizations that submit proposals intended to improve the quality of education in the state of Mississippi. The Foundation awarded $13,651 for initial implementation of the MCCFP in 1994. In 1995, the Foundation awarded $26,701 for continuation and expansion of the Program. In addition, $4,818 was received during the first year from various external sources.

The MCCFP also enjoys the encouragement and support of the fifteen community college presidents, the Executive Director of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Mississippi Community College Foundation. In 1994, the Phil Hardin Foundation paid expenses for one participant from each community college and two participants from the State Board. The State Board and all fifteen community colleges participated in MCCFP activities. In early 1995, community college presidents voted unanimously to provide a $1,000 contribution from each of the institutions choosing to participate. Eleven of the fifteen public community and junior colleges in Mississippi chose to participate.

Activities

The Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program consists of five activities conducted throughout the academic year:

1. **Leadership Retreat**: The major activity of the MCCFP is a week-long leadership retreat held at Lake Tiak-O'Khata in Louisville, Mississippi, in late July.

Enrollment is limited to 32 participants who must be employees of one of Mississippi's public community colleges or the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges. Two participants may be nominated by each community college president. Topics addressed during the retreat include vision building, conflict resolution, organizational change, communication skills, the politics of education, and managing diversity (see appendix A). Three hours of graduate credit may be earned through Mississippi State University by each Fellow completing the required course work. Texts selected for use in the retreat have included Managing Community Colleges: A Handbook for Effective Practice, published in 1994 and edited by Arthur Cohen and Florence Brawer and Making Sense of Administrative Leadership: The "L" Word in Higher Education, published in 1989 and written by Estela Bensimon, Anna Neumann, and Robert Birnbaum.

Various agencies, businesses and organizations collaborate with the Department of Educational Leadership to provide training activities during the Leadership Retreat. Some of these external groups include the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service, Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, The Stennis Center for Public Service, the MSU College of Business and Industry, and the Mississippi Public Education Forum.

2. **Service Project**: Each participant seeking course credit is required to develop a service project that will have a positive impact on his/her work environment, community organization, or professional association. Projects are selected by the participant who is then provided the training needed to begin project planning and implementation. Skills taught during the Leadership Retreat will contribute to the successful completion of the participant's service project.

3. **Professional Development Plan**: Each Fellow is required to create a Professional Development Plan. Beginning with an in-depth self-assessment, the Plan provides a framework that assists in the preparation of a strategic plan for long-term professional growth.

4. **The Phil Hardin Leadership Symposium**: New to the 1995 schedule, the Phil Hardin Leadership Symposium will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Mississippi Association of Colleges. The symposium will feature a nationally-recognized scholar in the field of community college education. The 1994 and 1995 Fellows along with current community college administrators will be invited to attend the symposium. This will provide networking opportunities for the Fellows and enhance the credibility of the Fellowship Program.

5. **Community College Network (CCN) Seminars**: During the Spring of 1995, community college presidents and other key administrators will participate in discussions regarding pertinent community college topics utilizing the Community College Network. The CCN is a statewide telecommunication network linking

Mississippi's community colleges. Topics may include Legislative Issues, Current Trends, The Politics of Education, and The Community College Role in Economic Development.

The role of today's community college leader is complex. The five activities of the MCCFP deliver a comprehensive leadership development program designed specifically to meet the needs of future community college leaders in the state of Mississippi. These activities will help program participants develop the skills necessary to provide leadership as Mississippi's community and junior colleges enter the twenty-first century.

Objectives

Many objectives have been identified for the Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program. One of the major objectives, primarily achieved through the Leadership Retreat, is the enhancement of individual leadership skills. In addition, participants have the opportunity to identify personal managerial and leadership strengths and weaknesses. Self-assessment and professional development aid participants in enhancing their decision-making capabilities. Because a key activity of the leadership process is managing change, participants are required to implement a positive change at their respective institution. Fellows must develop a service project that will impact their work environment. To motivate participants to consider long-term career goals, the creation and implementation of a Professional Development Plan is required.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of the Fellowship Program is evaluated each year through questionnaires completed by each participant. Evaluations are collected upon completion of each activity of the Program with results tabulated and reported to the Phil Hardin

Foundation. At the Leadership Retreat, speaker evaluation forms are collected daily. This data is summarized, analyzed, and provided as feedback to those individuals delivering presentations as well as to the coordinators as to the appropriateness of speakers and topics. An expanded evaluation form is mailed to each participant in November, following the deadline for submission of final course projects. This instrument is designed to assess the Fellows' attitudes toward items such as timing, design, and location of the program as well as personal reflections of their week-long experience. From these evaluations, program revisions are made and activities for the following year are planned.

Recommendations

Reaction to the Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program has been positive. Participants, guest speakers, faculty members, and others involved in the program have provided feedback concerning the success and importance of the program. Despite the enthusiasm that surrounds the project, coordinators are continually gaining new insights on improving the programming of the MCCFP; particularly from the community college faculty and administrators participating as Fellows. Based on information gathered from the initial class of 1994 Fellows, a number of recommendations for future MCCFP activities have been developed.

Many recommendations concerned participant selection. The nomination/selection process should begin in late April so that participation can be confirmed at least six to eight weeks before the Leadership Retreat begins. It is suggested that the MCCFP maintain a class size of no larger than 32 participants. Participation in the Fellowship Program should remain competitive and prestigious and participants should not be selected on the basis of last-minute

availability. A general criteria for selection should be developed by the Program coordinators in cooperation with community college presidents. However, the endorsement of the institutional president or the Executive Director of the State Board is essential and should continue regardless of the selection criteria or process.

Community and junior college presidents should be encouraged to consider diversity in their nomination process. Balance should also be sought between vocational and academic administrators. To insure maximum participation in the Leadership Retreat and other activities, two Fellowships should be reserved for each community college only until a specified date. After that date, positions not filled should be opened to other community colleges. Another suggestion is to open the program to private community and junior colleges in Mississippi, such as Wood Junior College and Mary Holmes Junior College, or to community college employees in other states. However, this recommendation may not be politically feasible.

Another area of participant recommendations involved programming. Since graduate credit is not an incentive for all participants, particularly those who have already earned their doctorate, other options such as auditing should be investigated. A satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading option, if allowed by the MSU Graduate School, should also be considered in lieu of awarding a traditional letter grade. It has also been suggested that during the Leadership Retreat, more time be allowed for informal group activities, particularly individual or group exercise and recreation. Although the weather was a restricting factor in 1994, participants seem to prefer to spend more time out of doors, taking advantage of their scenic surroundings, and engaging in competitive, team activities such as softball or volleyball.

It has been recommended that current and retired community college presidents be involved in the Leadership Retreat as speakers, instructors, mentors, or guests at social events. This will require moving the date of the Retreat to a date when presidents are more likely to be available. Elected class representatives should be invited to assume leadership roles for two years following the Leadership Retreat. This will lead to the development of a standing advisory committee of six to nine Fellows who actively participate in program planning and evaluation. In order to expand the network of Fellows, all alumni should be encouraged to attend social events and to participate in the Retreat as speakers, mentors, or instructors. Follow-up programs and activities, scheduled throughout the year, should be offered to the Fellows. It is important to keep Fellows involved with their peers and present community college leaders.

Participant recommendations also involved facilities and accommodations. Participants agreed that Lake Tiak-O'Khata is ideal for an intensive Leadership Retreat due to its location, privacy, excellent cuisine, accommodating service, and reasonable cost. One suggestion is that private rooms be provided as an option for participants. Those wishing to be assigned to double rooms could indicate roommate preferences. In addition, all participants should be notified of housing arrangements prior to arriving at Lake Tiak-O'Khata.

A final area of recommendations was generated by the MCCFP coordinators. Travel expenses and honoraria for guest speakers and instructors should be included in the cost of future workshops. The full cost of presenting a high quality instructional program must be factored into the price of attendance. During its initial year, the MCCFP depended on the availability and goodwill of Mississippi State University faculty and other public officials.

As the MCCFP increases in the number of participants, alumni, and activities, additional clerical and graduate student assistance will be required. For the 1995 MCCFP activities, it is estimated that approximately 400-500 hours of secretarial assistance beyond the hours contributed by the Educational Leadership clerical staff will be needed. This will continue to increase. At least one part-time graduate assistant will be needed during the summer to help organize and plan the year's events.

Funding for the rental or purchase of instructional resources should also be budgeted. In addition, a multi-year funding commitment should be sought from Mississippi State University, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, the Mississippi Community College Foundation, Mississippi's fifteen public community and junior colleges, and private foundations such as The Phil Hardin Foundation. It should also be noted here that during the 1995 MCCFP program planning, many of the aforementioned recommendations were addressed.

Future Plans

Leadership is a lifelong obligation and requires continuous learning. Therefore, we hope to engage MCCFP Fellows in a variety of activities on a continuous basis. Another opportunity which we hope to begin during the 1995-96 academic year is the Mississippi Education Policy Fellowship Program (MEPFP).

The Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP) is a national organization with sites in over thirteen states including North Carolina. The EPFP is a year-long opportunity for mid-career individuals to examine leadership and public policy and to increase their capacity to exercise leadership in a variety of challenging settings. The program introduces Fellows to

major policy and leadership issues at all governance levels and provides a forum for cross-agency discussion and problem solving. In addition, the program prepares diverse leaders who can work across agency and organizational boundaries to generate and implement collaborative solutions to problems challenging educational, health, and social services systems.

The Phil Hardin Foundation has been asked to fund four MEPFP Fellows during 1995-96. Two of these Fellows will be current or past Mississippi Community College Fellows. The participants will be nominated by their institution's president. The MEPFP will complement the Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program by providing future community college leaders with opportunities for additional growth.

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Appendix A

1995 Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program

July 23 - 28, 1995
Lake Tiak-O'Khata
Louisville, Mississippi

SUNDAY, JULY 23, 1995

THEME: Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that. (Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*)

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Arrive and Check-in	Main Lobby
5:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Welcome and Orientation Icebreaker: Linda Coats, Mary Holmes College	Tiak-O'Khata Room
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.	Dinner Keynote Speaker: Dr. Donald Zacharias President, Mississippi State University Introduction: Troy Brown, East Central Community College 1994 Fellow	Flamingo Room
7:30 - 7:45 p.m.	Break	
7:45 - 9:00 p.m.	"Business of Paradigms" Dr. Ned B. Lovell & Robert Hutchison MSU Department of Educational Leadership	Flamingo Room
9:00 p.m. - until	Dessert by the Lake Homemade Ice Cream	Lake Tiak-O'Khata Deck Main Lodge

MONDAY, JULY 24, 1995

THEME: Vision without action is just a dream. Action without vision is just passing time. Vision with action can change the world. (Joel Barker, *The Power of Vision*)

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Honeysuckle Hall
8:30 - 10:00 a.m.	"What is Leadership and does it Really Make a Difference?" Dr. Ned Lovell & Robert Hutchison MSU Department of Educational Leadership	Honeysuckle Hall
10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Break (GROUP PHOTOGRAPH)	Honeysuckle Hall
10:30 - 12:00 p.m.	"Leadership for Change" Dr. Ned Lovell & Robert Hutchison MSU Department of Educational Leadership	Honeysuckle Hall
12:00 - 1:15 p.m.	Lunch	Tiak-O'Khata Room
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.	"Selecting a Professional Staff: The Social Styles Model" Dr. W. S. "Bud" Smith, Registrar MSU Registrar's Office	Honeysuckle Hall
3:00 - 3:15 p.m.	Break	Honeysuckle Hall
3:15 - 4:45 p.m.	"Vision Building" Dr. Barbara Spencer, Professor MSU Management & Information Systems	Honeysuckle Hall
4:45 - 6:00 p.m.	Break	Honeysuckle Hall
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Dinner	Tiak-O'Khata Room
7:15 - 8:15 p.m.	"Building Consensus" Rod Risley, Executive Director Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society	Honeysuckle Hall
8:30 - 10:00 p.m.	Work Session for Change Project or Strategic Planning Session for Future Fellowship Activities	Honeysuckle Hall Honeysuckle Hall

TUESDAY, JULY 25, 1995

THEME: Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.
(Joseph C. Rost, *Leadership for the 21st Century*)

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Honeysuckle Hall
8:30 - 10:00 a.m.	"Listening -vs- Hearing" Jean Reeves, Project Associate MSU Pro-Miss	Honeysuckle Hall
10:00 - 10:15 a.m.	Break	Honeysuckle Hall
10:15 - 11:45 p.m.	"Professionalism" Dr. Everlyn Johnson MSU Extension - Home Economics	Honeysuckle Hall
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch 1st Annual John C. Stennis Lecture Keynote Speaker: Rex Buffington Executive Director, Stennis Center for Public Service	Tiak-O'Khata Room
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.	"Deans' Roundtable" Dr. Howell Garner, Dean of the College Copiah Lincoln Community College Dr. Marilyn Comer, Academic Dean Northwest Mississippi Community College Dr. Willis Lott, Vice President for Instructional Affairs Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College	Honeysuckle Hall
3:00 - 3:15 p.m.	Break	Honeysuckle Hall
3:15 - 5:00 p.m.	Physical Activities Randell Foxworth, Graduate Assistant MSU Department of Educational Leadership	Lake Tiak-O'Khata
5:00 - 6:15 p.m.	Rest/Relaxation	
6:15 - 7:30 p.m.	Dinner	Tiak-O'Khata Room
7:30 - 9:00 p.m.	"Celebrating Diversity in the Workplace" Paula Jernigan, Employee Relations Manager MSU Human Resources Management	Honeysuckle Hall
9:00 - 10:00 p.m.	Work Session for Change Project or Strategic Planning Session for Future Fellowship Activities	Honeysuckle Hall Honeysuckle Hall

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 1995

THEME: Technology and our human potential are the two great challenges and adventures facing humankind today. (John Naisbitt, *Megatrends*)

6:30 - 8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast on the Deck	Lake Tiak-O'Khata Main Lodge
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Trip to MSU campus	Leave Main Lodge
9:00 - 12:00 p.m.	"Surfing the Internet" Anna Hillman, Doctoral Student MSU Technology & Education	Mitchell Memorial Library
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch Keynote Speaker: Dr. John F. Perry, Jr. Professor, MSU Technology & Education	MSU Enology Lab
1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	Return trip to Lake Tiak-O'Khata	
2:30 - until	Recreation and Dinner on Your Own	

THURSDAY, JULY 27, 1995

THEME: Economic and Political Realities in Mississippi
Coordinator: Dr. Harvey S. Lewis, Dean - MSU College of Business & Industry
Introduction: Mike Edmonds - Jones County Junior College; 1994 Fellow

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Honeysuckle Hall
8:30 - 10:00 a.m.	"Workforce Education Act" Ed Schneider, Operations Manager Center for Quality & Productivity Rick Young, Director GTR Center East Mississippi Community College Dr. R.L. Qualls, President & CEO Baldor Electric Motor, Inc. Fort Smith, Arkansas	Honeysuckle Hall
10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Break	Honeysuckle Hall
10:30 - 12:00 p.m.	"Tech Prep" Dr. Stan Miller, Principal Starkville High School Jamie Stidham, Director Millsaps Vocational Center Starkville School District Rick Young, Director GTR Center East Mississippi Community College Roy Pollard, Personnel Manager Flexsteel, Inc. Starkville, Mississippi	Honeysuckle Hall
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch "The Power of Collaboration" Keynote Speaker: Dr. Donald Cotten, Executive Director Mississippi Public Education Forum Introduction: Elizabeth J. Hawkins - MSU Coordinator of Inter-Institutional Programs	Tiak-O'Khata Room
1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	Rest/Relaxation	
2:30 - 4:00 p.m.	"Lobbying the Legislature" Dale Lewis, Vice President for Instructional Services Holmes Community College William H. Bunch, Jr., Associate Executive Director of Programs State Board for Community & Junior Colleges Introduction: Dr. Larry Day, State Board for Community & Junior Colleges; 1994 Fellow	Honeysuckle Hall
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Break	Honeysuckle Hall

THURSDAY, JULY 27, 1995 (continued)

6:00 - until	Cookout with Fellows, Faculty, Alumni, and Special Guests	Honeysuckle Hall Deck
	Keynote Speaker: Amy Tuck Candidate for Secretary of State	

FRIDAY, JULY 28, 1995

THEME: Draw from others the lessons that may profit yourself.
(Terence, *Heauton Timoroumenos*)

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Honeysuckle Hall
8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Election of Class Representatives	Honeysuckle Hall
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	"Leadership: Obligations and Responsibilities" Danny McKenzie, Columnist The Clarion Ledger	Honeysuckle Hall
10:00 - 10:20 a.m.	"Faculty as Essential Partners in Community College Leadership" Dr. Kenneth Bishop, English Professor Itawamba Community College President, Mississippi Faculty Association for Community and Junior Colleges	Honeysuckle Hall
10:20 - 10:45 a.m.	Break (Check out of Rooms)	
10:45 - 11:45 p.m.	"Power of Vision" Dr. Ned B. Lovell & Robert Hutchison MSU Department of Educational Leadership	Honeysuckle Hall
11:45 - 12:00 p.m.	"Leadership Made Easy" Jethro B. Fuller, Consultant & Expert World Order of Leadership (WOOL)	Honeysuckle Hall
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Recognition Luncheon "The Future Role of Community Colleges" Keynote Speaker: Dr. Clyde Muse, President Hinds Community College	Tiak-O'Khata Room